

WHAT RELIGION MEANS TO ME

Madame Chiang Kai-Shek

Here is what one of the greatest women of modern times thinks about religion. As "First Lady" of China, she has guided the Chinese people in famine, flood and war.

By nature I am not religious. At least not in the common acceptance of that term. I am not by nature a mystic. I am practical-minded. Mundane things have meant much to me, perhaps too much. Mundane, not material, things. I care more for a beautiful celadon vase than for costly jewels. Also, I am rather skeptical. I used to think Faith, Belief, Immorality were more or less imaginary. I believed in the world seen, not the world unseen. I could not accept things just because they had always been accepted. A religion good enough for my fathers did not necessarily appeal to me. I do not yet believe in predigested religion in sugar-coated doses.

I knew my mother lived very close to God. I recognized something great in her. My mother was not sentimental. In many ways she was Spartan. But one of my strongest childhood impressions is of mother going to pray in a room on the third floor. She spent hours in prayer, often beginning before dawn. When we asked her advice about anything, she would say, "I must ask God first." And we could not hurry her. Asking God was not a matter of spending five minutes to ask Him to bless her child and grant the request. It meant waiting upon God until she felt His leading. And I must say that whenever mother prayed and trusted God for her decision, the undertaking invariably turned out well.

Perhaps this is why I sometimes think I have grown spiritually because mother was taken from me. Or to be perfectly honest, I sometimes think perhaps God took mother from her children that we might grow. As long as mother lived I had a feeling that whatever I did, or failed to do, mother would pray me through. Though she insisted she was not our intercessor, yet I know for a certainty that many of her long hours of prayer were spent interceding for us. Perhaps it is because religion in my mind is associated with such a mother that I have never been able to turn away from it entirely.

During the last seven years I have suffered much. I have gone through deep waters because of the chaotic conditions in China, the lopping off of our richest provinces, the death of my sainted mother, flood, famine, and the intrigues of those who should have been helping to unify the country. All these things have made me see my own inadequacy. More than that, all human insufficiency. To try to do anything for the country seemed like trying to put out a great conflagration with a cup of water. Sometimes I would say to myself (never to my husband): "What if we do achieve a strong country? In the sum total of things what does it amount to! As surely as a country rises to the zenith, so surely does it decline!"

During these years of my married life, I had gone through three phases that are related to my religion. First, there was a tremendous patriotism—a passionate desire to do something for my country. Here was my opportunity. With my husband, I would work ceaselessly to make China strong. I had the

best of intentions. But something was lacking. There was no staying power. I was depending on self.

Then came the second phase. The national tragedies, to which I have referred, happened and I was plunged into dark despair. And then I realized that spiritually I was failing my husband. My mother's influence on the General had been tremendous. His own mother was a devout Buddhist. It was my mother's influence and personal example that led him to become a Christian. Too honest to promise to be one just to win her consent to our marriage, he had promised my mother he would study Christianity and read the Bible. And I suddenly realized that he was sticking to his promise, even after she was gone; he had promised my mother and yet there was so many things he did not understand. In common parlance, I have to "hand it to him" for sticking to his daily Old Testament reading when without illumination there was little help in it for him.

I began to see that what I was doing to help, for the sake of the country, was only a substitute for what he needed. I was letting him head toward a mirage when I knew of the oasis. Life was all confusion. Out of my despair, and the feeling of human inadequacy, I was driven back to my mother's God. I knew there was a power greater than I. I knew God was there. But mother was no longer there to do by interceding for me. It seemed to be up to me to help the General spiritually, and in helping him I grew spiritually myself.

Thus I entered into the third period where I wanted to do not my will but God's. Life is really very simple; and yet how confused we make it! In old Chinese art there is just one outstanding object, perhaps a flower, on a scroll. Everything else in the picture is subordinated to that one beautiful thing. An integrated life is like that. What is the one flower? As I feel it now, it is the will of God. But to know and do His will calls for absolute honesty with oneself, and using one's mind to the best of one's ability. Political life is full of falsity and diplomacy and expediency. My firm conviction is that one's greatest weapon is not more receptive falsity, more subtle diplomacy, but the simple, unassailable weapon of sincerity and truth.

My religion is a very simple thing. It means to try with all my heart and soul and strength and mind to do the Will of God. I feel that God has given me a work to do for China. China's problems in some ways are greater today than they ever were before. But despondency and despair are not mine today. I look to Him who is able to do all things, even more than we ask or think.—Selected.

IN THE MOVIES

According to a statement in the Nashville Christian Advocate based on reports from the United States Department of Commerce for 1934, there is in this country alone a weekly audience in the movie theaters of nearly 88,000,000. Each day the movies attract throughout the world 100,000 children under five years of age; 665,000 between the ages of five and fifteen; 1,982,000 between fifteen and twenty-four; 2,744,000 between twenty-four and forty-four years; 750,000 between forty-four and sixty-four years; and 150,000 of those over sixty-five years of age.—Sel.

Temperance Column

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging. Whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.—Prov. 1:20.

POSSIBLE TO BE ILLEGALLY DRUNK ON LEGAL BEER

The question whether a man can become illegally drunk on a beverage legally non-intoxicating in Kansas was raised August 1, 1937, for decision by the state's higher courts, says a Wichita, Kansas, Associated Press dispatch.

"The issue was brought up by John Madden, Jr., attorney for William Leifheit, charged with driving while intoxicated at the time his truck figured in a collision.

"Leifheit and defense witnesses testified he had drunk nothing but 3.2 per cent beer, declared non-intoxicating by an act of the last legislature.

"Leifheit could have drunk three gallons of a beverage of less than 3.2 per cent alcoholic content and still not be held as drunk," Madden told the court.

"Judge C. Edward Murray said he could not follow Madden's reasoning, overruled his demurrer, and allow the trial to proceed.

"Both Madden and the judge indicated the issue would reach the supreme court."

In short, if we get the idea, the intoxicating qualities of alcoholic beverages cannot be repealed by statute.—American Issue.

ALCOHOL A CAUSE OF MENTAL DISEASE

Alcohol has long been recognized and designated as one of the causes of mental disease. It may give rise to clear-cut psychoses or it may act as a precipitating factor in other forms of mental disease.

Dr. Grover Kempf, senior surgeon of the United States Public Health Service, said that Galinger Municipal Hospital for the District of Columbia admits about 3,400 cases annually for mental observation. Of these about thirty to forty per cent are alcoholics.—Anti-Saloon League.

"THE OLD SALOON MUST NOT COME BACK"

That promise has been kept. We no longer have that vile institution where a big-bellied bartender wearing a white apron cracked the heads of his customers with a bung-starter when they got too rough, and where a big bowl of diced raw pork and onions was served as a free lunch to comply with the law and cover the breath of the old bums.

But in its stead we have "The New Deal Cafe" (this quotation is copied from a liquor sign), where pretty barmaids and waitresses deal out the stuff. We also have the combination roadhouse and tourist camp, where young couples can drink and dance until the small hours of the morning and then rent a cabin for the rest of the night. These modernized "cafes" and "grilles" are different, too, in that they take in the raw material at an earlier age, but they are dealing out the same kind of liquid hell fire that murders both soul and body.

It is said, "A rose would smell as sweet by any other name." So would a skunk or a rum-hole.

Will America ever awake to the ghastly joke that the devil played on her with the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment? Or are we still satisfied because the New Deal has so faithfully kept at least one campaign pledge—to bring back booze.—J. D. Howard, in Wilkes Barre Daily.

"To be wise too late, is the best definition of a fool."—Sel.